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**THAT'S A WRAP, 2015.
JOIN US FOR A LOOK BACK AT
THE YEAR WE HAD IN CHICAGO.**

**Hits & misses
with our favorite
athletes**
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LET'S HEAR IT FOR 2015



Elise De Los Santos

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As 2015 winds down, the time has come for us to do what our generation does best: wax nostalgic about things that just happened.

It seems like only 357 yesterdays ago that we were starting off a fresh new year. Since then, a president's library and a

filmmaker's museum have decided to call Chicago home, and the Cubs and the Hawks had the city stressing and celebrating during their postseason runs; we binge-watched from our couches, listened to the latest albums on our commutes, and ate, drank and were merry at restaurants and bars, movie theaters and music fests.

In today's issue, we've gathered together the year's best in news, sports, eat & drink, movies and music. From the stuff that grabbed national attention to the stuff only Chicagoans care about, these are some of the things that defined 2015.

As always, you can find more lists and reminiscences at redyechicago.com/2015. And we'll be back with our regular daily RedEye print edition on Monday, Dec. 28. In the meantime, stay up to date with the latest news at redyechicago.com.

Thanks for a great 2015, Chicago. Let's do it again next year.

Elise De Los Santos

Elise De Los Santos
RedEye night editor



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IT'S A CHICAGO GEM,
OF COURSE IT SPARKLES.



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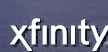
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TOP NEWS STORY OF 2015



Protesters march during a demonstration for Laquan McDonald, who was fatally shot by a Chicago police officer in October 2014. AP PHOTO

VIDEO PROMPTED PROTESTS, CHANGE

By Leonor Vivanco | REDEYE

The public release of Chicago police video of an officer fatally shooting 17-year-old Laquan McDonald on a South Side street in October 2014 was not just the story of the year, but a pivotal moment in the city's history, experts say.

"This is a watershed event," said Arthur Lurigio, psychology and criminal justice professor at Loyola University Chicago. "The video is the focal point for bringing to public light in an unprecedented way the ongoing concerns between mostly African-American communities and the Chicago Police Department," he said, adding, "This is an opportunity for us to view the problems systemically and collectively."

The video, released just before Thanksgiving despite Mayor Emanuel pushing to keep it under wraps, contradicts claims laid out in police reports by Officer Jason Van Dyke—who fired 16 shots at McDonald—and at least five other officers that McDonald moved or

turned threateningly toward officers. It shows McDonald walking away.

Peaceful protests were swiftly organized, with crowds marching for justice, taking the demonstration to Michigan Avenue during Black Friday shopping and continuing days later, with calls for Emanuel and Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez to resign.

The mayor said he has no plans to resign after having won the election in a runoff in April. Alvarez faces a March primary election.

Dick Simpson, a political science professor at University of Illinois at Chicago and former Chicago alderman, said it's too soon to tell whether the video will have an effect on the 2019 mayoral race or bring together a coalition of progressives—similar to what happened in the 1970s when the issue of police brutality came to a boil: U.S. Rep. Ralph Metcalfe, a South Side alderman, split from Chicago's Democratic political machine and helped spur

a coalition of African-Americans, Latinos and whites whose muscle would lead to the election of Harold Washington and the progressive regime in the 1980s, Simpson said.

"This is probably a larger outpouring of demonstrations and has had a more immediate effect," Simpson said of the McDonald case. The fallout has included the ouster of Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy, the resignation of the head of the Independent Police Review Authority and a public apology from Emanuel.

Simpson expects the U.S. Justice Department, which will conduct a review of the police department and its use of deadly force, to revise police procedures, require reforms and order a monitor to oversee compliance.

"I expect particularly the whole process of supervision of police will be totally revamped," Simpson said.

LVIVANCO@REDEYETCHICAGO.COM | @LVIVANCO
THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE CONTRIBUTED.

5 OTHER STORIES THAT DOMINATED THE NEWS IN 2015

The murder of Tyshawn Lee

Tyshawn Lee was 9 years old when he was executed in November in an alley near the park he stopped at to play on the way to his grandmother's house. Authorities reportedly believed his killing was carried out in retaliation for other gang shootings.

Chicago increases its minimum wage

The city's minimum wage increase went into effect in July, raising the wage from \$8.25 an hour to \$10 an hour. By 2019, the minimum wage in Chicago will reach \$13.

'Chi-Raq' takes on Chicago's violence

The Spike Lee movie was filmed in Englewood despite Mayor Emanuel's objection to the film's title. The story, based on the ancient Greek play "Lysistrata," centers on women going on a sex strike to promote peace and end violence. A star-studded premiere of the movie was held at the Chicago Theatre, with Lee, John Cusack and Jennifer Hudson, but not all Chicagoans support the movie, with critics including Chance the Rapper and Rhymefest.



Jake Arrieta and Anthony Rizzo
BRIAN CASSELLA/TRIBUNE FILE

Cubs make the playoffs

The Cubs advanced to the playoffs for the first time since 2008 and beat the Pirates and the Cardinals. Don't forget Kyle Schwarber's homer when he knocked the ball—the "Schwarbomb"—well on top of the video screen, where it was preserved in a plexiglass case. But in the end, they got swept by the Mets in the National League Championship Series.

Hawks win the Stanley Cup

The Blackhawks reclaimed the Stanley Cup, winning the championship for the third time in six years (2010, 2013 and 2015). Thousands of fans lined downtown streets for the parade and filled Soldier Field for the championship rally. —L.V.

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The 606 trail
JOSE M. OSORIO/TRIBUNE FILE

TOP 5 WAYS CHICAGO AND MOTHER NATURE CLASHED, FOUND PEACE

By Leonor Vivanco | REDEYE

Who knew parks and recreation were so controversial? No, not the show, but the actual green space.

This year Chicagoans often debated the issue of protecting parkland versus landing a prestigious institution or money-making event on the city's open space.

From the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art's legal battle over whether it can be built on Museum Campus to park preservationists' fight over the transfer of 20 acres of parkland to the city for the Obama presidential library, Mother Nature was the center of attention in 2015.

1 South Side wins bid for Obama library

Earlier this year, Chicago's South Side won the bid for the Barack Obama Presidential Center. It will go either in Jackson Park or Washington Park. A decision is not expected until next year, with construction starting after Obama's term in office, according to the Tribune. Friends of the Parks were critical of the park district land transfer for the library.

2 A fight brews over the Lucas Museum

Friends of the Parks is fighting a legal battle over leasing 17 acres of lakefront property near Soldier Field to the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art. This fall, the museum, which will house "Star Wars" creator George Lucas' art and film collection, won approval of the City Council, Chicago Park District and Plan

Commission. It would be built on what is currently a parking lot Bears fans use to tailgate.

3 Riot Fest moves to a new park

Riot Fest moved from Humboldt Park to Douglas Park this year after the potential return of the music fest divided the community and was opposed by Ald. Roberto Maldonado (26th). He cited the park damage and disruption to park activities that hosting Riot Fest caused.

4 The 606 debuts

The highly anticipated rails-to-trails project called The 606 opened on June 6. The 2.7-mile elevated trail slices through Bucktown, Wicker Park, Humboldt Park and Logan Square. The centerpiece of the \$95 million project is its path for runners, cyclists and pedestrians. The trail connects to neighborhood parks as well.

5 Nature preserve at Northerly Island opens

A 40-acre nature preserve opened in September on Northerly Island, where former Mayor Richard M. Daley once closed Meigs Field in a midnight raid.

The park has already hosted educational activities, and in fall 2017, after the grasses and flowers grow in more, the fences bordering the park's path will come down, making way for park-hosted camping.

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OUR 2015 BREAKOUT ATHLETE PREDICTIONS

WHAT DID WE GET RIGHT?

By Chris Sosa | REDEYE

Back in January, RedEye staff and contributors gave you our best guesses as to which Chicago athletes would have a huge 2015. Time to see how we did.

CHSOSA@REDEYEHICAGO.COM | @REDEYESPORTSCHI; GETTY, AP, TRIBUNE FILE PHOTOS

1 Jake Arrieta, Cubs VERDICT: HIT

Let's see. A no-hitter and a Cy Young Award? Hard to imagine Arrieta—or any pitcher, for that matter—having a better year.

2 Javier Baez, Cubs VERDICT: MISS

His day might come eventually. However, one home run and four RBIs in 28 games with the Cubs hardly qualifies as impressive.

3 Jessica Breland, Sky VERDICT: MISS

After averaging 9.7 points and 6.8 rebounds in 2014, those numbers dipped to 6.7 and 5.9 in 2015. Darnit.

4 Will Brooks, mixed martial arts VERDICT: HIT

Brooks won both his fights in 2015, retaining his title belt.

5 John Danks, White Sox VERDICT: MISS

Make that a huge miss. He pitched a decent amount of innings (177 2/3) but produced a mere 7-15 record with a 4.71 ERA.

6 Ego Ferguson, Bears VERDICT: MISS

Ferguson was suspended four games for violating the NFL's performance-enhancing drugs policy and has only three tackles. We won't make that mistake again.

7 Tyler Flowers, White Sox VERDICT: MISS

Flowers hit .239 and the Sox cut ties with him after the season. Maybe his next team will get more out of him.

8 Kyle Hendricks, Cubs VERDICT: MISS

A near-miss considering he acquitted himself fairly well this season (8-7, 3.95 ERA, 167 strikeouts), but a miss nonetheless.

9 Micah Johnson, White Sox VERDICT: MISS

Even on a lousy team, Johnson lasted just 36 games with the Sox; he spent most of the season in the minors.

10 Nikola Mirotic, Bulls VERDICT: MISS

Mirotic didn't quite reach the bars we set (he was second in Rookie of the Year voting), though the Bulls have to be happy with his contributions so far (10.6 points, 6 rebounds per game in 2015-16).

11 Jahlil Okafor, college basketball VERDICT: HIT

His recent off-the-court troubles notwithstanding, Okafor helped Duke win the national championship and averages 17.6 points and 8 rebounds with Philadelphia in his rookie NBA season. It's just too bad for him the 76ers are awful.



12 CM Punk, mixed martial arts

VERDICT: MISS

We'll call this an incomplete, which is technically a miss. He has yet to make his MMA debut. UFC president Dana White said Punk could have his first fight by the summer.

13 Harry Shipp, Fire

VERDICT: MISS

He led the Fire in assists with eight and scored three goals. Unfortunately for Shipp and the Fire, they finished well out of the playoff hunt.

14 Teuvo Teravainen, Blackhawks

VERDICT: HIT

He did his best for a 21-year-old. More importantly, he had four goals and six assists in helping the Hawks win their third Stanley Cup in six years and is a mainstay on this year's team.

15 Taylor Townsend, tennis

VERDICT: MISS

The best Townsend could muster was the first round in the Australian and French opens.

FINAL TALLY

Yeah, we have eat our words on this, unfortunately. Only four of our 15 picks reached our expectations. But will that keep us from making 2016 predictions? Nope. Not one bit.



Elena Delle Donne
AP FILE PHOTO

AND THE 2015 CHICAGO SPORTS STUD AND DUD OF THE YEAR ARE ...

RedEye

Much like she did to opponents this season, Elena Delle Donne dominated the voting for 2015 Chicago Sports Stud of the Year.

The Sky star, who won the WNBA's MVP award in her third season, ran away with RedEye's annual poll recognizing the year's best performances. Delle Donne snapped up 69 percent of the vote, marking the second straight year a Sky player has been named Stud of the Year. Her teammate Allie Quigley was the 2014 winner.

In earning her league's top annual honor, Delle Donne was tops in the WNBA in scoring (23.4 points per game) and free-throw percentage (95 percent). The three-time All-Star also was third in rebounding (8.4 per game) and blocked shots (2.0) in leading the Sky to their third consecutive playoff appearance.

Delle Donne beat out a trio of Stanley Cup champs, three Cubs standouts and a pair of Bulls stars. Cy Young winner Jake Arrieta of the Cubs was her closest competitor, pulling down 11 percent of the vote.

Meanwhile, White Sox fans hope Adam LaRoche comes back better than ever in 2016. The slugger was voted Chicago Sports Dud of the Year with 46 percent of the vote, ahead of former teammate Jeff Samardzija (29 percent) and Bears kicker Robbie Gould (25 percent). LaRoche hit just .207 with 133 strikeouts in 2015, and his team finished a disappointing fourth in the American League Central.

HERE'S HOW THE VOTING SHOOK OUT FOR STUD OF THE YEAR:

Elena Delle Donne
SKY
69%

Jonathan Toews
BLACKHAWKS
3%

Jake Arrieta
CUBS
11%

Jimmy Butler
BULLS
2%

Patrick Kane
BLACKHAWKS
5%

Joe Maddon
CUBS
1%

Kris Bryant
CUBS
4%

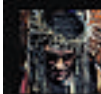
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BULLS
1%

Duncan Keith
BLACKHAWKS
4%

Anthony Rizzo
CUBS
0%

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Check out the full list of the Top 15 best movies, as well as the year's most underrated, overrated and disappointing, at redeychicago.com/2015.



Charlize Theron in 'Mad Max: Fury Road'

10 BEST MOVIES OF 2015

By Matt Pais | REDEYE

There were a lot of movies I liked in 2015. These are the ones that stuck with me the most from No. 10 to No. 1. Email mpais@redeychicago.com to let me know your picks for the year's best.

10 **Girlhood**

Not just way better than "Boyhood" but better than the vast majority of movies that try to depict what it's like to be young and figuring it all out, with all the peaks and valleys and decisions and mistakes that go with it. This French drama is stylish and sad and something not nearly enough people have seen.

9 **Mad Max: Fury Road**

A pulsing, electric jolt of demented mayhem, the series' newest and best installment creates its own universe, then heart-poundingly threatens to burn it to the ground. That Oscar nominations now seem

very likely is just one kickass piece of director George Miller's unexpectedly feminist bonanza. Chaos is rarely this fun.

8 **Sleeping with Other People**

The romantic comedy isn't dead—it just needs the right people for resuscitation. Clearly that's Alison Brie, Jason Sudeikis and writer-director Leslye Headland, who to a degree update "When Harry Met Sally" for the hookup-happy, post-dating era but really just dare to take a funny, lively look at timeless love cross-referenced with modern, technology-enhanced sexuality, still recognizing that, so often, timing is everything.

7 **Anomalisa** (shown at the 2015 Chicago International Film Festival, opening Jan. 8)

It's weird, it's exhilarating and it needs to be on your calendar in big bold letters. Writer/co-director Charlie Kaufman ("Adaptation," "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind")



'Magic Mike XXL'

is already a screenwriting legend, and with this animated drama about alienation, he shows just how much more he's got to give. Somehow.

6 **Magic Mike XXL**

Anything but a retread, "Magic Mike XXL" brilliantly converts the guys (who couldn't have better camaraderie) from mere

objects/providers of fantasy to people living their own dream, hoping to be as successful and happy as a painter/singer/etc. in the long-term as they are as performers in the short-term. This winningly low-key comedy is the most unexpectedly wise movie of the year and probably will never get the credit it deserves.

Continued on Page 11 »

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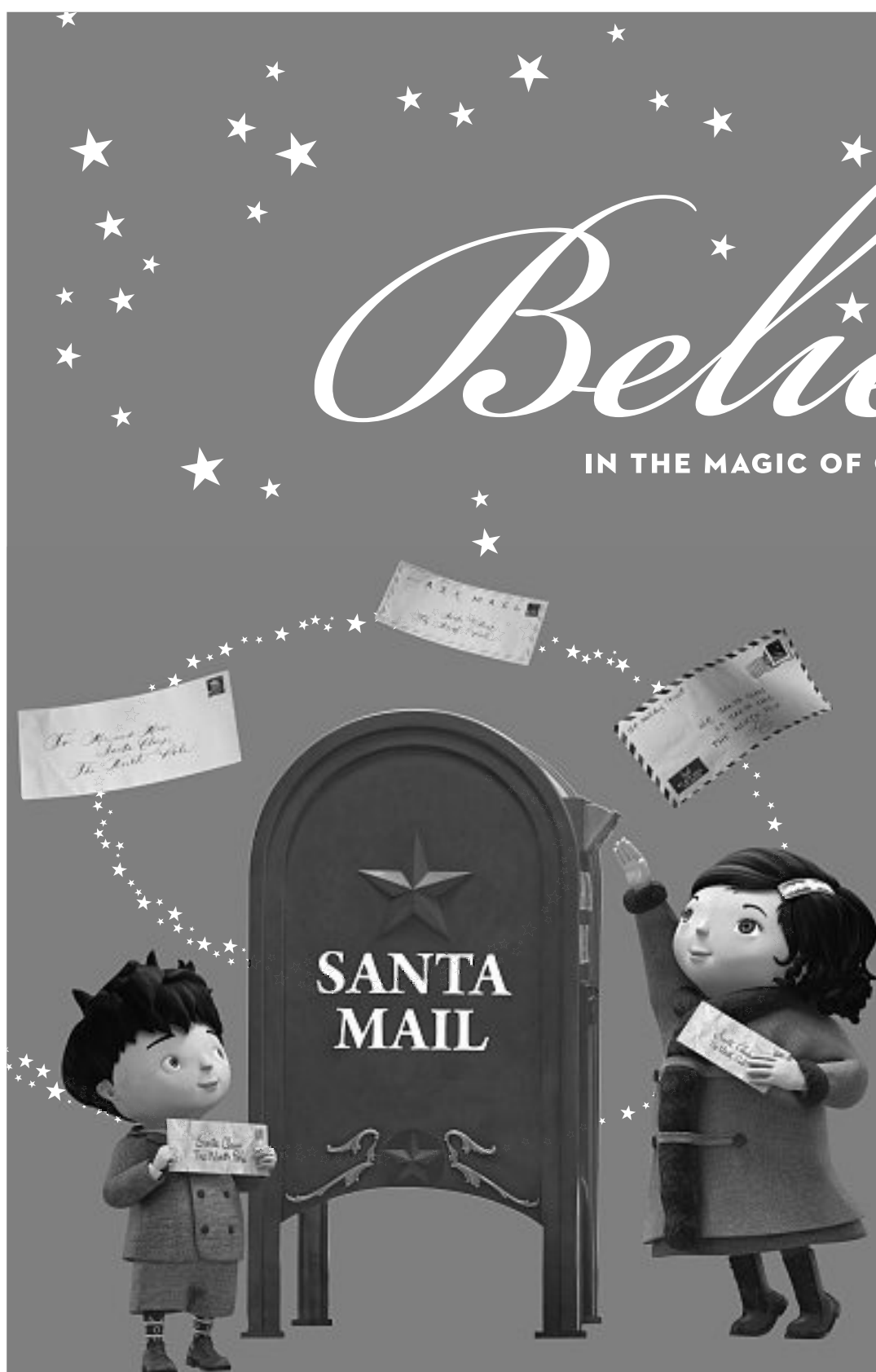
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«Continued from Page 8

5 The Big Short

I am the last person interested in a two-hour movie about the financial world. Director/co-writer Adam McKay (“The Other Guys”) somehow converts the true story of the guys who spotted the mortgage-based financial collapse coming into a hilarious portrait of corruption, stupidity and the guts to take a chance on logic and honesty.

4 Mississippi Grind

Rich writing can rejuvenate almost anything you think you don’t need to see again. The story of gambling and addiction and uneasy friendship gets new life in this terrific road movie from Ryan Fleck and Anna Boden (“Half Nelson”), featuring Ryan Reynolds and Ben Mendelsohn with career-best stuff. Seek it out.

3 The Last Five Years

I hate musicals. A lot. But I loved this one because of all the ways it’s different from most musicals: With awesome performances from Anna Kendrick and Jeremy Jordan, “The Last Five Years” is a great movie about



Olivia Cooke, Thomas Mann and RJ Cyler in ‘Me and Earl and the Dying Girl’

relationships moving from beginning to end and end to beginning and wondering how people click and unclick. Delivered in song form? Executed like this, sure.

2 Spotlight

Is it possible that a movie that deserves to win Best Picture actually will win Best Picture this year? It certainly looks like it with all the completely deserved love for “Spotlight,” one of the all-time best movies about journalism, and simply a major, important, never-dull examination of the way powerful and very different institutions operate.

1 Me and Earl and the Dying Girl

A few times in our lives we see movies that provide a transcendent experience, where you can’t laugh hard enough or be more impressed or be more surprised that, for the first time in forever, watching something has made you cry. Repeated viewings only have solidified my wonder at how this perfectly acted coming-of-age story inverts clichés and makes the right choice, true to the characters and the difficulty at any age to know what to say and do in certain situations, especially when it comes to death. “Me and Earl and

15 WORST MOVIES

There were a lot of bad ones that didn’t make the list (“Zipper,” “Freeheld,” “The Gallows,” “Mistress America,” “In the Heart of the Sea”). These are the worst of the worst from No. 15 to No. 1, though don’t worry too much about the order. Horrible is horrible. — M.P.

15. “The 33”
14. “Aloft”
13. “Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials”
12. “Jupiter Ascending”
11. “The Water Diviner”
10. “No Escape”
9. “Rock the Kasbah”
8. “Cinderella”
7. “Pan”
6. “The Longest Ride”
5. “The Intern”
4. “Pixels”
3. “Hot Tub Time Machine 2”
2. “Fantastic Four”
1. “Youth”

the Dying Girl” is beautiful and my favorite movie of 2015.

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Kendrick Lamar
LENNY GILMORE/REDEYE

TOP 10 ALBUMS OF 2015

By Josh Terry | REDEYE

In 2015, a lot of artists made music that was fun, weird, powerful, challenging and awesome to listen to. Without using extremely broad strokes, it's tough to connect all the disparate threads of one year in music—there's not a big center of a Venn diagram that includes Sufjan Stevens, Carly Rae Jepsen, and Kendrick Lamar—so I'm just going to say that these 10 artists all had killer albums. Your list will probably be different, and that's OK.

10 "Painted Shut," Hop Along

A music press headline surrounding the release of Philadelphia emo-rock band Hop Along's "Painted Shut" wonders about lead singer Frances Quinlan: "Is This the Best Voice in Rock Music Today?" However hyperbolic, there's something to that accolade. Quinlan might not be the kind of vocalist who'd win "The Voice" or something, but the way she throws her voice around and embraces the cracks and scratchiness in her delivery makes this album incredible. Truly an incredible, passionate performance throughout.

9 "The Gold Standard," Marrow

Part of the reason I love Marrow's debut album, "The Gold Standard," so much is because it's immensely clear that the band is the way a lot of the songs feel: freewheeling

and sometimes formless. The blistering swagger of "Paulson" makes way for a sprawling rock jam title track, while the folk-pop of "Ocean of Glory" makes way for a looping, simmering "secret song." Marrow is not set on sticking to just one idea and signature sound, and "The Gold Standard" is proof that these experiments pay off.

8 "Natalie Prass," Natalie Prass

It feels weird listing Natalie Prass' gorgeous and ornate debut album as a product of 2015. Though officially released this year, the effort was written, recorded and completed in 2012. Either way, it would have ranked high on any year-end list, as Prass' songwriting backed with her label Spacebomb Records' incredible house band (both string and horn sections) makes for some of the most timeless-sounding songs.

7 "Prom King," Skylar Spence

Skylar Spence's ebullient "Prom King" is loaded with some undeniable dance-pop jams and is my personal favorite for chair-dancing at work. Songs like "Fall Harder" and "Can't You See" showcase Ryan DeRobertis' masterful ability to make electronic pop music sound fresh and lively. With enough grooves to warrant endless repeats, "Prom King" irresistibly keeps the party going.

6 "I Love You, Honeybear," Father John Misty

Had "I Love You, Honeybear" not been one of the best and most unflinching dissections of love songs and masculinity in album form, Father John Misty's hyper-self aware and semi-satirical persona would be overbearing. While some still will get that impression (he certainly is goofy and snarky), "I Love You, Honeybear" has enough really good songs to overpower any hesitations.



Father John Misty
ARMANDO L. SANCHEZ/TRIBUNE

5 "Me," Empress Of

The fact that Empress Of, aka Brooklyn-based singer and multi-instrumentalist Lorely Rodriguez, titled her debut album "Me" is apt in a lot of ways. For one, Rodriguez performed and wrote all the music herself, resulting in a vast and expansive collection of electro-pop. Secondly, her lyrics are so personal and open it's like she's offering a part of herself. It's a gorgeous statement full of want, lust and melancholy, specifically the social justice-minded "Water, Water" and the obsessive "Everything Is You."

4 "Carrie & Lowell," Sufjan Stevens

"Carrie & Lowell" found Sufjan Stevens returning to his folk roots, replacing his weirder, electronic experiments of his last couple albums with a banjo and acoustic guitar. It was a welcome return to his delicate earlier days, but it might also be the best, most resonant thing he's ever written. It's an album about death, speci-

cally the death of his mother, and there are so many times you might need tissues. A wholly powerful and necessary meditation on loss.



GETTY IMAGES

3 "Emotion," Carly Rae Jepsen

Few pop stars come close to Carly Rae Jepsen's absolute mastery of the wide-eyed, stomach-churning excitement of having a crush. "Emotion," the best damn pop record of the year, is basically the feeling of anticipating a first date or the early stages of a new relationship. She's the tour guide through "Boy Problems," dives into lovelorn escapism on "Run Away With Me," shows a balladeer side in "All That" and followed up "Call Me Maybe" with a song just as catchy in "I Really Like You."

2 "To Pimp A Butterfly," Kendrick Lamar

"To Pimp A Butterfly" isn't an album you just dive into; it's the kind of knotty and dense classic that requires a week-long commitment to its multi-layered, politically astute and throwback soul-referencing aesthetic. But it's not work to get through. Even though patient and studied repeat listens unfold new layers and meaning, it's instantly accessible across the hard-hitting "Hood Politics," the Obama-approved allegory of "How Much A Dollar Cost" and the P-Funk snap of "King Kunta." Add the year's most resonant song in "Alright," and we'll be talking about this record for decades.

1 "Surf," Donnie Trumpet and the Social Experiment

There isn't one album that made me more excited about life this year than Donnie Trumpet and the Social Experiment's "Surf." Front-to-back, it's the year's most fun, most

THE 20 BEST SONGS OF 2015

Certain songs can define a year. They can become an anthem for a paradigm-shifting protest. They can signify an artist's career reinvention. They can be loving odes to a hometown and its influential radio stations. Or they can just set the Internet ablaze with goofy memes and GIFs. But mostly some tracks can just be so undeniably good that it'd be impossible to not look back on 2015 with one of their melodies in your head. These 20 songs did all of the above, from playful rap, rousing soul revival, genre-bending pop and ripping punk-rock to everything in between. This year is one for the books. — J.T.

20. "Souvenir," Milo feat. Hemlock Ernst
19. "Girl," The Internet
18. "S.O.B.," Nathaniel Rateliff and the Night Sweats
17. "Beautiful Blue Sky," Ought
16. "Bathroom at the Beach," Melkbelly
15. "Milk Duds," Lady Lamb
14. "Breathe Life," Jack Garratt
13. "Young Blood," The Districts
12. "It Hurts Until It Doesn't," Mothers
11. "Let It Happen," Tame Impala
10. "Hotline Bling," Drake
9. "Cha Cha," D.R.A.M.
8. "Where Are Ü Now," Jack Ü feat. Justin Bieber
7. "Derivative," Warehouse
6. "Sleep, Rinse, Repeat," Ona
5. "Heaven Only Knows," Towkio (feat. Lido, Chance the Rapper, Eryn Allen Kane)
4. "Boy Problems," Carly Rae Jepsen
3. "I Know There's Gonna Be (Good Times)," Jamie xx feat. Young Thug
2. "Angels," Chance the Rapper feat. Saba
1. "Alright," Kendrick Lamar

HONORABLE MENTIONS:
 "Dime Out," Titus Andronicus
 "River," Leon Bridges
 "Slipping," Eryn Allen Kane
 "Windows," Donnie Trumpet and the Social Experiment
 "Like Me," Lil Durk feat. Jeremih
 "Raising the Skate," Speedy Ortiz

collaborative and most heartwarming release. The first for-free iTunes album download (it was downloaded more than 500,000 times in its first week) proves that Donnie Trumpet is an excellent bandleader and that Chance the Rapper could shine as a sideman. If I were to list every transcendent moment (to name a few: the goosebumps-inducing "Miracle" and "Sunday Candy," the infectious "Slip Slide," "Familiar" and "Go," the ripping trumpet solo in "Just Wait") I'd need a much bigger word count. Just listen and "Pass the Vibes."

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1 UNDER-THE-RADAR CHICAGO RELEASES

By Josh Terry | REDEYE

This was an amazing year to cover Chicago music. So many bands across a wide variety of genres churned out incredible albums, mixtapes and EPs that made this city the best place in America for new music. Because of the wealth of talent found within the city limits, this list easily could have been 50 instead of 10. A handful of local releases made my list of best albums of the year. This list, on the other hand, focuses solely on the under-the-radar releases deserving of love that haven't yet received it.

10 "Ruby" Lili K

Placing herself in the zeitgeist of Leon Bridges and Nathaniel Rateliff and the Night Sweats, Lili K (whose full voice and retro soul carry the album's jazzy offerings) established herself as Chicago's go-to crooner for vintage sounds made new. This album is a grower.

9 "Chico" Santah

Man, there are so many great choruses on this album. "Here Are My Shells" might be the most endlessly listenable local rock song

of the year, and other cuts, such as "Did We Sing?", come damn close too.

8 "Homme" Homme

The duo of Marrow's Macie Stewart and local musician Sima Cunningham, Homme had one of the year's best EPs. The impressive harmonies soar above even the considerable vocal chemistry displayed between Stewart and Cunningham's brother Liam Kazar in Marrow.

7 "Spiderbait" Vamos

While the city always has an excellent slew of garage rock releases, Vamos' "Spiderbait" was the cream of the crop. If you like rock 'n' roll played blazingly fast and loud, you'll dig this.

6 "Season" Leather Corduroys

Savemoney's Joey Purp and Kami de Chukwu formed Leather Corduroys and set a high bar for Chicago rap after dropping "Season" early this year. The chorus of "Mexican Coke" would have ranked toward the top of my 2015 songs list had it not dropped in 2014.

5 "Varsity" Varsity

Forgetting to place Varsity in my midyear roundup of the best local releases was probably my most-embarrassing moment as RedEye music reporter. As far as jangly indie pop goes, Chicago couldn't match this band's self-titled release.

4 "Aviary: Act 1" Eryn Allen Kane

What a year for Eryn Allen Kane. She had a small role in "Chi-Raq," prominently appeared on "Surf," worked with Prince and seems poised to take over the world next year. "Aviary: Act 1" is just a taste of what's to come (its companion piece is dropping in January). But there isn't a crisper, more refined voice coming out of this city. "Slipping" and "Have Mercy" are perfect doses of soul-pop.

3 "Primrose Green" Ryley Walker

I'm running out of things to say about Ryley Walker. Over the past year, I've written a lot about how this is an incredible folk release in the same vein as Van Morrison's "Astral Weeks." It's good! He's got a great voice and is a superb guitar player.

Honorable Mentions

"The Hollow," Dastardly;
 "The Expanding Planet," Hundred Heads;
 "Ballin Like I'm Kobe," G Herbo;
 "Many Levels of Laughter," J Fernandez;
 "Cinco De Money," Ty Money;
 "Late Nights: The Album," Jeremih;
 Jimmy Whispers, "Summer In Pain"

Mick Jenkins
 LENNY GILMORE/REDEYE FILE

2 "In Plain Speech" Circuit Des Yeux

All year I didn't hear anything quite like "In Plain Speech," the gorgeous full-length from Haley Fohr, who performs as Circuit Des Yeux. Her deep alto is positively mesmerizing, adding layers of emotional nuance to every track. She reaches dramatic heights on dark cuts like "Ride Blind," and elsewhere she's understated and morose, like on chamber-pop highlight "Fantasize the Scene."

1 "Wave[s]" Mick Jenkins

When he released "The Water[s]" in 2014, Mick Jenkins already had placed himself at the top tier of Chicago rap. "Wave[s]" is a midway point between that project and his upcoming album "The Healing Component." Instead of being a wholly cohesive project surrounding a single idea, this EP moves in a variety of satisfying ways. "Your Love" highlights Jenkins' ability to create a dance floor hit, and other tracks, such as the wordplay-heavy "P's and Q's," document how icy and unbeatable his flow can be.

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5 2 6 4
3 9 4 2
5 1 7
6 3 4
4 7 3 9
3 1 5
4 9 7
3 7 5 4
2 3 6 1

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7 6 9 3 8 5 2 1 4
2 4 5 6 7 1 9 3 8
1 3 8 9 4 2 6 5 7
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3 5 4 1 9 8 7 6 2
9 1 2 7 3 6 4 8 5
5 7 1 2 6 3 8 4 9
8 2 6 4 5 9 3 7 1
4 9 3 8 1 7 5 2 6

TUESDAY'S SOLUTIONS

HER KRONA SWAR
DOPE HAVOC CAPE
GNAT ARENA EVES
SNICKERFO NEST
FAITH ELLI
CRAFTS MAMACASS
HOWLS PARIS LEFT
AWAY GOTTA DATE
FOR BAKES GERUM
CYCLINER STAMPS
UMA THUD
BONN DISHONEST
AGOG INNER NOAH
TRUE AFIRE DALE
HENS NOTES PER

ACROSS

- 1 Has supper
- 6 Uses a plus sign
- 10 Desagatory remark
- 14 setter, reddish dog
- 15 Enjoy a long bath
- 16 Saga
- 17 de León, noted explorer
- 18 Baking __, fridge freshener
- 19 Rainbows
- 20 More devious
- 22 Department store chain
- 24 __ up, confined
- 25 Bothers
- 26 Actress Lansbury
- 29 Pinkish color
- 30 Actress Arthur
- 31 Scornful look
- 33 Approaches
- 37 __ out; sleep under the stars
- 39 Actor Buddy
- 41 Cabbage salad
- 42 Embezzle
- 44 First, second and third
- 46 Grow old
- 47 Staircase piece
- 49 __ out; got rid of gradually
- 51 Be a foreboding sign
- 54 Hospital room with many beds
- 55 African nation
- 56 Result of a high fever, perhaps
- 60 A single time
- 61 Earnest appeal
- 63 Rope loop
- 64 Lager
- 65 Juicy fruit
- 66 Windy day toys
- 67 Is inaccurate
- 68 Strong urges
- 69 Store away

DOWN

- 1 Skinny __; swims naked
- 2 Numbered golf club
- 3 Largest digit

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
14 15 16
17 18 19
20 21 22 23
24 25
26 27 28 29
30 31 32 33 34 35 36
37 38 39 40 41
42 43 44 45 46
47 48 49 50
51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59
60 61 62 63
64 65 66
67 68 69

- 4 Get away
- 5 New __; Israel's dollars
- 6 Valuable thing
- 7 Portal
- 8 Family member
- 9 Henie or Kwan
- 10 Makes jump
- 11 Big
- 12 Stomach woe
- 13 Takes ten
- 21 Senseless
- 23 Wise __ owl
- 25 Tiny skin openings
- 26 Basics
- 27 Orderly
- 28 Sporting event
- 29 Actor Romero
- 32 Receded
- 34 Cry of sorrow
- 35 Violent anger
- 36 Lang. spoken in Stockholm
- 38 Mates
- 40 Kathmandu's nation
- 43 Fibbed
- 45 Gets smaller
- 48 "Make it __!"; impatient shout
- 50 Skillful
- 51 Investigate
- 52 Proprietor
- 53 A.J. Foyt or Jeff Gordon
- 54 __ away; erodes
- 56 College official
- 57 Tiny bit
- 58 __ up; spends
- 59 Fit together, as gear teeth
- 62 Gypsy Rose __

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8 BEST NEW BARS

By Morgan Olsen | REDEYE

Finding a quality cocktail in Chicago isn't hard. More often, it's a question of what new tiki bar or speakeasy you're going to try on any given Saturday night. In a city with endless options, it can be tough to filter through the hype and find those bars you'd recommend to the pickiest of friends. This year, we fell head over heels with these eight spots. Check out two more bars that made our list at redeyechicago.com/2015.

The Broken Shaker

19 E. Ohio St. 312-940-3699

Tucked inside the Freehand in River North, this Miami import is littered with colorful rugs, shag blankets and macrame wall hangings. The dark, moody atmosphere makes it the perfect destination for a first date.

The Drifter

676 N. Orleans St. 312-631-3887

This speakeasy is hidden in the bowels of Green Door Tavern and brings something different to the rigmarole of River North's bar

scene. Tarot cards replace traditional cocktail menus and provide a Rolodex of tasty concoctions for owner Liz Pearce to choose from.

Bom Bolla

1501 N. Milwaukee Ave. 773-698-6601

The Pops for Champagne offshoot brought cava, vermouth on tap and traditional tapas to Wicker Park earlier this year. The laid-back atmosphere and brunch service kept us coming back again and again.

Pub Royale

2049 W. Division St. 773-661-6874

When Small Bar closed, we poured one out and wondered what could ever fill the void. But then the folks behind Lone Wolf and Sportsman's club gave us this British-Indian concept with tasty curries and a boozy mango lassi that haunted our dreams.

Lost Lake

3154 W. Diversey Ave. 773-293-6048

The Logan Square tiki bar landed in Chicago with its rum-infused cocktails and damn near



Jungle Bird cocktail at Best Intentions
LENNY GILMORE/REDEYE FILE

Best Intentions

3281 W. Armitage Ave.
312-818-1254

It was the year of the dive bar: Wood paneling, orange carpet, jukeboxes and beer fridges got another chance to shine. But no bar did it better than this Logan Square newbie. With an elevated but casual food menu (po' boys, anyone?) and killer drinks, Best Intentions is totally charming and proves that you can have quality cocktails at a neighborhood dive.

stole our hearts. Paired with Chinese takeout joint Thank You, it's a one-stop shop that fills up fast every night of the week.

Tack Room

1227 W. 18th St. 312-526-3851

As the fourth drinking establishment inside Pilsen's Thalia Hall, this piano bar had a solid reputation even before it opened. Dripping candelabras, equestrian decor and a curated cocktail menu make it worth the trip.

Lowcountry

3343 N. Clark St. 773-996-9997

Formerly a low-lit date spot with fancy cocktails, this seafood boil picnic and private karaoke combo proved to be a crowd pleaser that more appropriately suits Wrigleyville. Staying true to the spirit of the neighborhood, it holds late-night beer pong tournaments when the kitchen closes.

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ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY HEATHER SCHROERING.

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BEST NEW RESTAURANTS OF 2015

Izakaya Mita
1960 N. Damen Ave.
773-799-8677

Squid guts aren't for everyone, but if you're adventurous, the bowl of fizzy, salty ika shiokara, or fermented calamari, at Izakaya Mita is some of the best in town. Actually, it might be the only bowl served in town, and that's what I like about it. You'll also find a decent bowl of ramen and great binchotan charcoal grilled meats.

Nasu and cheese sandwich with jalapeno at Izakaya Mita
LENNY GILMORE/REDEYE FILE

By Michael Nigrant | FOR REDEYE

As the year draws to a close, I find that once again I've eaten far more than my doctor would sanction. As always, there wasn't enough time or stomach space to get to everything I wanted. I still really need to try Bom Bolla and Maple & Ash. Dos Urban Cantina, from former Topolobampo chef de cuisine, just opened, and I really should have made it to Ixcateco Grill in Albany Park.

This is all a long way of saying that what follows is not so much an end-all, be-all list. It's a collection of the best new restaurants that opened in 2015 that I was able to try. That being said, I've tried over 50 new restaurants this year, so the eight spots you'll read about are something special. Enjoy and stay hungry!

Boeufhaus

1012 N. Western Ave. 773-661-2116

Somewhere along the way, we were led to believe steakhouses must be huge, impersonal dining halls serving massive portions that only Michael Phelps could appreciate during his Olympic training sessions. Boeufhaus—an intimate, gauzily lit West Town storefront serving sensibly sized and reasonably priced plates—is the antithesis to all that. You will not find a better cut of beef than the 55-day dry-aged ribeye. If you're taking clients out downtown instead of spending your money here, you're a sucker.

De Quay

2470 N. Lincoln Ave. 872-206-8820

Chicago might be a dining destination serving myriad international cuisines, but Dutch-Indonesian fare hasn't gotten much love in these parts. Until now. Chef David de Quay is

filling that hole in spades with inspired dishes like fiery Indonesian fried rice, nasi goreng, and gouda and black pepper potato-stuffed dumplings that eat like a cross between crab rangoon and a pierogi. Terry McNeese brings a passionate level of service, a Dutch touch of sorts that you just don't see outside of the super high-end restaurants in town.

Formento's

925 W. Randolph St. 312-690-7295

If your Italian grandmother studied at the Culinary Institute of America, she might cook as well as Formento's executive chef Tony Quartaro and his crew. But even then, though her Sunday gravy would likely be made with neck bones, it probably wouldn't be emulsified with pancetta, nor would it be accompanied by housemade fennel sausage and meatballs so moist you might cry after taking a bite. Even if your nonna is a great

cook, the leather banquettes, mod chandeliers and impeccable service at Formento's will be way better than the plastic-covered sofa you'd be forced to sit on at Grandma's.

Furious Spoon

1571 N. Milwaukee Ave. 773-687-8445

Chicago was once a Japanese noodle desert. But in the last few years, the city has felt like a classier version of college thanks to Oiistar, High Five Ramen, Strings Ramen, Ajida and Ramen-San. Though the bowls served by these spots were definitely better than the Maruchan Instant Lunch that fueled my freshman year, something was still missing. Some had bad noodles, some had thin broth, some had floppy garnishes or overcooked eggs. From housemade noodles to perfectly soft-boiled eggs and thick broth, the Furious team does it right.

Corned Beef Factory

1009 W. Lake St. 312-666-2535

Sorry, Manny's, but this is where you'll find Chicago's greatest corned beef. This is mostly because you can't get a fresher product. The corned beef is made in the back and travels feet (not miles) to the front counter, where it's steamed and sliced in thin pink ribbons and stuffed between airy caraway-studded slices of rye, topped with Swiss cheese and a slather of yellow mustard.

GreenRiver

259 E. Erie St. 312-337-0101

A few years ago, if you told someone there would be an upscale restaurant near the top of the Northwestern Memorial Hospital patient pavilion, they might have redirected you to a hospital psychiatrist. But this year—thanks to legendary New York restaurateur Danny Meyer, executive chef Aaron Lirette and head bartender Julia Momose—that idea is no longer a delusion. The breathtaking terrace and craft cocktails make this one of the best places to drink in the city. Add in creamy, uni-spiked spaghetti and crusty sourdough slathered with smoky whitefish, and you've got one of Chicago's top dining destinations.

Gus's World Famous Fried Chicken

847 W. Fulton Market 312-733-1971

The city doesn't usually receive out-of-state franchises very well. Our independent spots are generally light-years ahead of anything that's been built to satisfy the appetites of the whole country. But Memphis-based Gus's is an exception worth embracing. For less than \$10, you get a feast of chicken with a sheath of shattering, crispy, slightly spicy skin enrobing flesh that bursts with juice all the way to the bone.

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